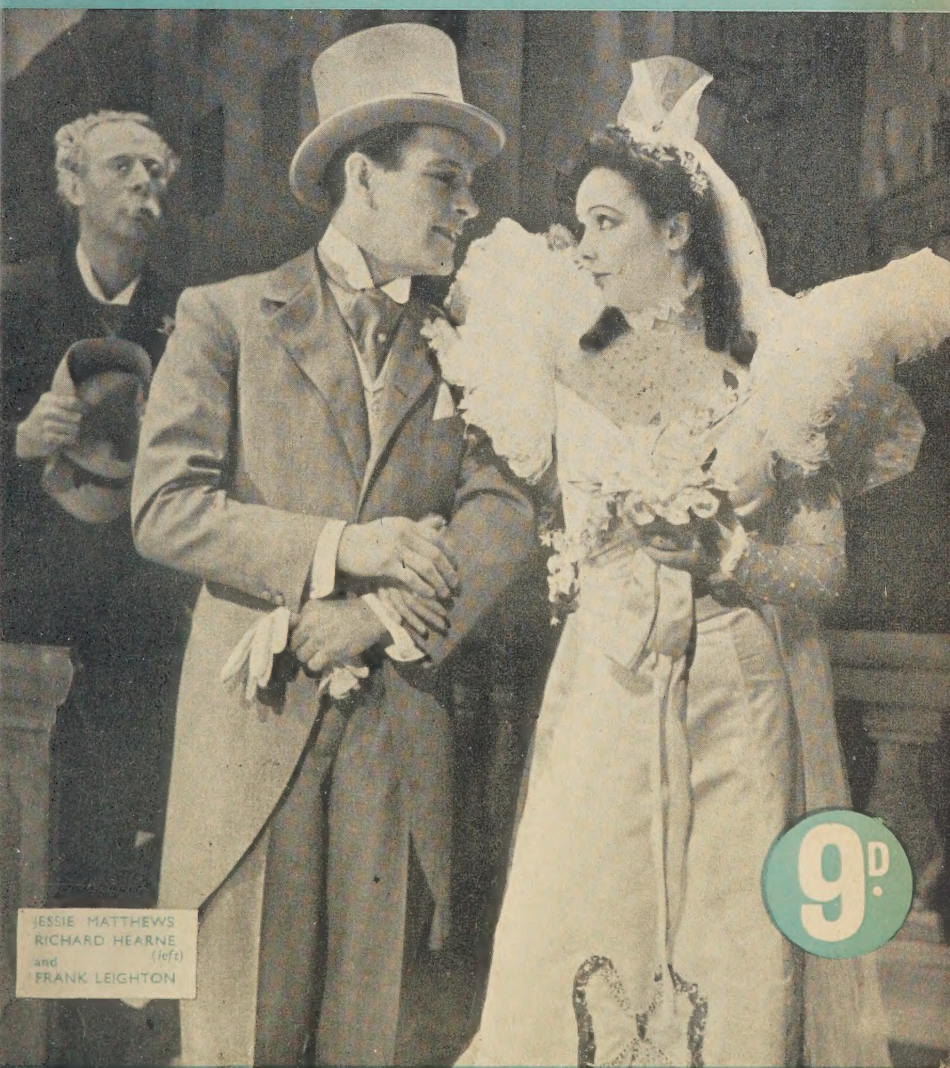


OCTOBER, 1942

37-213 Scenes from "Wild Rose" and "Murder Without Crime"

THEATRE WORLD



JESSIE MATTHEWS
RICHARD HEARNE
(left)
and
FRANK LEIGHTON

9^d

COSTUMES AND WIGS ON HIRE

Picture by Swarbrick Studios

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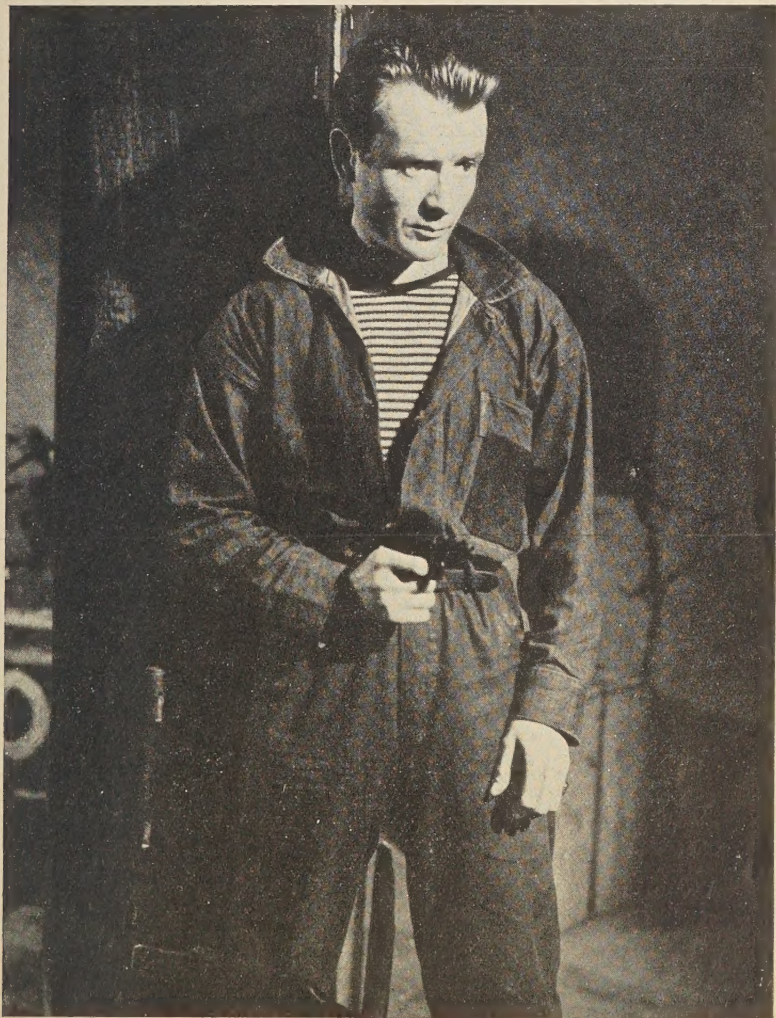
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THEATRE WORLD

Vol. XXXVII, No. 213

OCTOBER, 1942



Swarbrick Studios

John Mills

gives one of the finest performances of his career in *Men in Shadow*, the thrilling war play by his wife, Mary Hayley Bell, which is reviewed in this issue. The picture shows him as Lew, the heroic R.A.F. pilot, officially posted as "missing" over France, who is in reality leading a secret underground movement against the Nazis.

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Theatre World

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Vol. XXXVII
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October,
1942

Over
the Footlights

ONCE every now and then, with an inevitability that seems startling on reflection, a star is born in the West End. We know now that even war cannot put a stop to this phenomenon or lessen the trumpet blast with which the news is put across to the public.

In most cases we are inclined to feel that a grave disservice has been done to the actor or actress concerned. How rarely can they live up to the heightened reputation thrust upon them, and with what regularity they sink back into the obscurity from which they have emerged.

Happily we do not feel the same disquiet about London's latest star. For one thing Pamela Brown did not rise out of obscurity, unless you can call the appreciation of some of the provinces' most intelligent theatre-goers by that name. Neither "beginner's luck" nor that conventional type of beauty which sometimes rockets nonentities into the limelight are at the back of Miss Brown's discovery. Intelligence, personality (loads of it) and flawless stage technique are the firm foundation of her London success. She will live down all the hysterics and the blah, and we look forward with keen anticipation to the opportunity of seeing her in some of the dramatic roles she played with such success before she came to London, though that opportunity is certain to be long delayed judging by the brilliant success of *Claudia*.

ROBERT ATKINS has opened a season of Shakespeare's plays at the Westminster with *The Merchant of Venice* (produced too late for review this month) in which he himself plays the part of Shylock with Adèle Dixon as Portia.

ALSO just produced, at the Cambridge Theatre, is the new Eric Maschwitz musical romance, *Waltz Without End*. The romantic story, enhanced by Chopin's loveliest melodies, is set in a succession of brilliantly colourful scenes, and as in the case of *Balalaika*, Eric Maschwitz's record breaking musical play, a strong feature is made of ballet dancing, with plenty of comedy interwoven in the story. Jane Carr, Ivor Sheridan, Betty Warren, Jimmy Godden, Eliot Makeham, Vernon Kelso, Bertram Dench, Bertram Wallis and Marianne Deeming are in the cast. The décor is by Joseph Carl and costumes designed by Dorothy Glover.

Waltz Without End is presented and staged by Jack Buchanan, and the Cambridge Symphony Orchestra of thirty-six pieces is under the direction of Bernard Grun, who also arranged the music.

THE *Little Foxes* (with Fay Compton) at the Piccadilly and the *Importance of being Earnest* (with John Gielgud, following the end of the *Macbeth* season on the 10th) are two H. M. Tennent, Ltd., productions due in October.

F.S.

Wherever smoking is permitted—ABDULLAS FOR CHOICE



(Left): The moment in *Macbeth* which most impressed the writer of this article.

fatigue, but only too eager to start playing the rôle of theatregoer twice daily for a week.

AS one of the characters in "THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER" talked about "crystal moments," it occurred to me that each show I saw gave me a "crystal moment"—a purple patch by which I should always remember the entire production—a high spot, in itself worth travelling all those two hundred miles to experience.

I am back in the wilderness, poorer in pocket but richer in mind than at any time since I was exiled from the Metropolis in the early days of the war, for now I cherish a rare collection of peak moments which each of seven very fine shows has offered me. They are priceless recollections which no one can wrest from me and which can always be in my possession, no matter where Fate decrees to plant me on this catastrophic planet.

Entr'acte

IN WHICH ERIC JOHNS RE-DISCOVERS THE MAGIC OF THE WEST END THEATRE

THE deadly drone of bombers in training, strumming incessantly on my eardrums all day and every day for best part of three years appeared to immobilise my imagination by numbing it into a strange state of discontented vegetation.

Out in the Welsh wilderness I became a source of astonishment to myself as in turn I failed to find interest in walking, reading, listening to the radio, or going to the cinema. In desperation I endeavoured to stimulate some interest in living by choosing a book written away back in the Fifties when bombers had not been conceived, even in an Edgar Allan Poe nightmare. I picked up Flaubert's "Madame Bovary."

On one of the pages of this novel I found the clue to my malady, as well as a cure for it. Someone says: "I must invigorate my mind, for I'm getting rusty here. We'll go to a theatre, to the restaurant; we'll make a night of it!" That was my own case in a nutshell. My war-weary mind needed refreshing, and only the words, colour, and music of the theatre could hope to produce a quick and lasting result.

Without a qualm of conscience I swept past half-a-dozen "Is Your Journey Really Necessary?" posters glaring at me outside the railway station and wedged my determined way into the suffocating corridor of a London express. Five hours later I stumbled on to Paddington platform, half-dead with

I HAVE to thank John Gielgud for the most arresting theatre picture I have brought away with me. It is the forlorn finale of the ill-fated Banquet Scene in his admirable production of "MACBETH," after all the guests have been disturbed and dispersed by the unseen and uninvited ghost of Banquo. Steeped in blood, the guilty pair sit alone, faced with the prospect of yet another sleepless night and haunted by the bleak fact that their fruits have turned to ashes.

As Macbeth, Gielgud stares before him, brooding upon the possibility of a Macduff Purge, while Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, as his partner in crime, finding her crown rather more than she can bear, wearily removes it from her brow and gently rests it upon her knee, as she sighs to her husband, "You lack the season of all natures, sleep." It is an unforgettable moment.

In tragic intensity it vies with Gielgud's "Tomorrow and Tomorrow" soliloquy. In the centre of a desolate stage, without a friend at his side, he looks the very personification of despair in his gloomy granite castle, where the cold fading light so perfectly heightens the impression that he is suffering hell on earth by failing to discover any sound reason for existence. Not a single false note falls on either eye or ear in this scene in which as both producer and actor Gielgud is at the very height of his powers.

IN complete contrast to this picture of despair is the Emlyn Williams message of hope, framed in his delightfully human and humorous play, "THE MORNING STAR." The final curtain is one of haunting beauty, which must send every member of the audience out into the blitzed streets full of renewed hope and proud to have lived through such turbulent times.

Emlyn, after being estranged from his wife in the play, "finds" her again amid the stark horrors of the blitz when together they look death full in the face; unlike Macbeth, he finds a reason for living in a war-crazed world when told he is about to become a father. Darkness is falling as they sit together on one of the emergency beds grouped round the oil stove in their shelter-living room. His arm steals gently across her shoulders as they gaze ecstatically upwards, contemplating the miracle of life—quite undisturbed by the howling sirens announcing yet another rain of death as the curtain falls.

DIANA WYNYARD'S first entrance in "THE WATCH ON THE RHINE" is a thing of rare beauty. After twenty years as a hunted refugee on the Continent she returns to her warm and wealthy home just outside Washington. Standing on the threshold of the luxurious living room she drinks in its beauty, its restfulness, and its security. A beatific smile breaks across her face and tears swim before her eyes as she turns to her husband and three children, inviting them to enjoy peace and security for the first time in their lives. Diana Wynyard conveys every subtlety of the situation without uttering a line, making her entrance one of the finest pieces of acting London has seen for many a day.

ROBERT MORLEY'S first entrance in "THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER" is just as theatrically effective in quite a different way. As a great radio personality and public figure, he is detained in a one-horse town in Ohio, having slipped on his host's step and injured his hip. When the curtain rises he is about to emerge from his bedroom for the first time and his hostess, so anxious to show off her celebrity to a group of admiring small town gossips, is all of a flutter to greet him. The bedroom door opens to admit the great man's wheeled chair. In a flash he sums up the nauseating situation and scatters the admiring throng by whipping them with three withering words—"I may vomit!"

IVOR NOVELLO, in his "DANCING YEARS" biergarten over-looking Imperial Vienna, still holds us agog with suspense to greet his prima donna heroine, who, like Madame Butterfly, is first heard off-stage before we are permitted

to see her in the flesh. Ivor, playing his beloved piano under the chestnuts, slowly works his "Waltz of My Heart" up to an exciting climax with Muriel Barron's voice drawing nearer and nearer until the music reaches the full height of its beauty as she bursts into sight with a sunshade balanced on her shoulder in such a way that the early morning Viennese sunlight can still play on her radiant auburn hair.

NOEL COWARD has written the wittiest comedy of his career in "BLITHE SPIRIT," in which Kay Hammond pouts deliciously through the part of her life as the ghost-wife who is brought back as a materialisation by an unseen adenoidal child-guide named Daphne. Condemned to live as a ghost with her former husband, now married a second time, poor Kay finds life far from easy and considerably more involved than it was before her death. The high spot of the play is her exasperated outburst when she curses the guide who "paged" her while playing baccarat on the other side. With real feeling she exclaims, "If I ever get back I'll strangle that bloody little Daphne!"

IF you want proof that a thing of beauty is a joy for ever, you have only to witness Vivien Leigh's third act entrance in "THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA" when she makes her first appearance after the death of her artist-husband, wholeheartedly obeying his request that she wear no mourning. Her dress is a blaze of cerise, with a corsage of garnets, while emeralds the size and shape of walnuts glitter in suspension from her delicate ears. Back in the Nineties playgoers used to gasp as Mrs. Patrick Campbell made her electrifying scarlet cloaked entrance in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." And now to-day far more sophisticated wartime audiences at the Haymarket still gasp when Vivien Leigh appears as the widowed Mrs. Dubedat.

THOSE who knew the theatre and fell under its spell in the good old days can return to Town without any fear of anti-climax. Even the most fastidious taste will not find the new theatre wanting when compared with the old. Great artists are still gracing the boards. Far from idly walking through their parts, many are giving the finest performances of their careers. John Gielgud has never surpassed his conception of Macbeth; Emlyn Williams proves he can scale the heights even without the aid of a flamboyant part streaked with insanity; and Diana Wynyard demonstrates that there are still great moments in the theatre when silence is golden. The old magic still floats across the footlights, without evoking so much as a sigh of regret for the good old days.



John Vickers

(Left):

PAMELA BROWN

whose brilliant performance as Claudia has brought widespread acclaim from the critics, is not unknown to readers of *Theatre World*. Mention of this young actress's outstanding ability has been made in this magazine on several occasions in connection with her work in the provinces, notably at Oxford.

Vaudeville—September 3

"Men in Shadow"

St. Martin's—

September 17

"Claudia"

REVIVALS

"Night of the Garter"

—Strand, September 9

"The Belle of New York"

—Coliseum, September 16

"A Man with Red Hair"

—Ambassadors, Sept. 18

New Shows of the Month

"Men in Shadow."

IT is rather surprising that a woman should have written this exciting and topical play about Occupied France: Mary Hayley Bell has brought a masculine outlook to bear on her subject, though there are some loose ends and improbable situations. However, you will scarcely notice these at the time, being almost certainly willing to be carried along by the excitement of the theme and the clever acting of another almost all-male cast.

Worth the visit alone is the magnificent performance of John Mills (husband of the authoress) who as Lew, a "missing" R.A.F. pilot, organises a secret anti-Nazi organisation with a fanaticism that yet has a streak of English dispassionateness. His air of tense self-control could not be bettered; nor the unleashing of his pent-up feelings in the terrible and realistic fight with the German spy.

The whole action takes place in the loft of an old disused mill near the French coast. Lew's co-workers in sabotage are Kenny and Polly (Robert Wilton and Hubert Gregg), Moy (Paul Bonifas), a French peasant patriot, and Cherie, his wife (Alice Gachet). Complications arise through the presence of Mordan (Ralph Michael) another R.A.F. pilot, whose legs have been broken in a crash, and the arrival of Enshaw (Derek Elphinstone), a spy disguised as a R.A.F. man, who bids fair to wreck Lew's delicately poised organisation. Needless to say, the Nazis are outwitted. F.S.

"Claudia"

WERE it not for the extraordinarily brilliant performance of Pamela Brown in the title role, and the hardly less outstanding acting of the rest of the cast, one would not expect Rose

(Continued on page 31)



JESSIE MATTHEWS as SALLY

Pictures by Swarbrick Studios

FIRTH SHEPHARD

presents

“Wild Rose”

A new Treatment of an old
Story set to Music

by

JEROME KERN

Devised and Staged by
ROBERT NESBITT

TO quote the prologue to *Wild Rose*, this is “an old story, perhaps one of the oldest in the world. The heroine is Cinderella, but she might be called Mary, Irene or Sally. No matter what her name is, in the end you will always find her in the arms of Prince Charming, and that’s where you will find her to-night eventually, but it won’t be in any 18th century ball-room, nor even on the steps of St Margaret’s, Westminster, beside some modern Gallahad, for the sweep of strings shall carry us back to New York in the 1900’s. . . .” Against such a nostalgic background it is small wonder that Firth Shepherd’s latest and most lovely production has called forth the appreciation of London theatregoers. The welcome return of Jessie Matthews, who has never given a better performance, the brilliant work of Richard Hearne and other members of the big company, lovely melodies and a production of lavish pre-war proportions are ingredients guaranteed to bring welcome forgetfulness of present grim realities.

ACT I

The Kitchen Quarters of Nikko's Restaurant, downtown



Sally, a little girl who is determined to make her name as a dancer, comes to New York in search of fame. Hungry and dispirited she creeps into the kitchen of a well-known restaurant in search of food. (Left): Nikko catches Sally in the act, and after an argument she is installed as kitchen maid.

(Andrea Melandrinis as
Nikko.)



Sally meets her "Prince Charming," Tom Blair, wealthy regular patron of Nikko's. He promises to help her to realise her ambition to be a dancer, and together they sing "Look for the Silver Lining

Frank Leighton as Tom
Blair.)

Night time on the Sidewalk

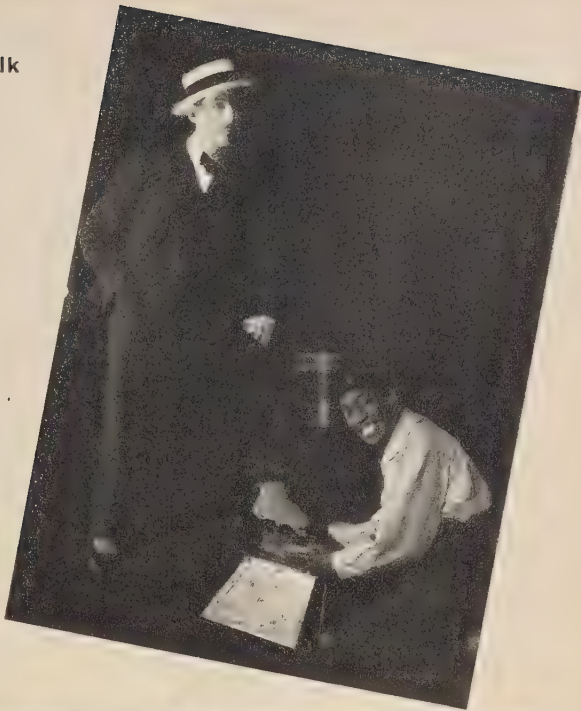
A cheerful interlude in which we meet Elof (left), and Johnny Nitt, the coloured dancer.

(Below):

The Garden of Nikko's Restaurant

Janssen, an Animal Trainer, as usual far from sober, seeks an interview with Gaston De Frey, a Theatrical Agent.

(L.-R.: Andre Randall as Gaston De Frey, Richard Hearne as Maxie, the waiter (in reality an Archduke come down in the world) and Jack Leopold as Janssen.)



Gaston De Frey and Rosy Roxie, his
vivacious Secretary, entertain Nikko's guests.
(Elsie Percival as Rosy Roxie.)



The Garden of Nikko's Restaurant



Sally, inspired by Maxie, her
firm friend, surprises every-
one with her lovely dancing.



Sally has a spot of trouble with Bridget Paddelovitch, Nikko's martinet wife (Wimfred Davis).



Maxie gives a helping hand to Sally, who is overwhelmed by the contract Gaston De Frey has just given her. Tom Blair, however, does not approve of De Frey and his methods.



Lillian Russell (Linda Gray) sings to the assembled company

ACT II

Jim Brady's Party— in the Waldorf Astoria

Jim Brady, Diamond King (Jack Morrison), holds one of his brilliant parties, to which he has invited many celebrities of the time, including Lillian Russell, famous stage star, Colonel Cody (Buffalo Bill) and Dana Gibson's world-famous American beauties. But high spot of the evening is to be the meeting between an Archduke (none other than Maxie) and Gaby Denys, the celebrated French actress on account of whom he was exiled to America. But Mlle. Denys is unable to come and De Frey, her agent, in desperation substitutes Sally.

(Right): Sally arrives at the party to play the first and most difficult role of her career



Maxie, as puzzled by Sally's presence as Sally is by his, and arrayed in plumes borrowed from Janssen, the trainer, entrances everyone with a performance of the highly acrobatic "Passing-Out Ceremony" of his old university days.



Sally, who has given a wonderful performance as the French star, is unmasked by an angry Tom Blair. However, Jim Brady is not to be outdone, and is quickly persuaded to finance a mammoth new show, with Sally, the new discovery, as the star.

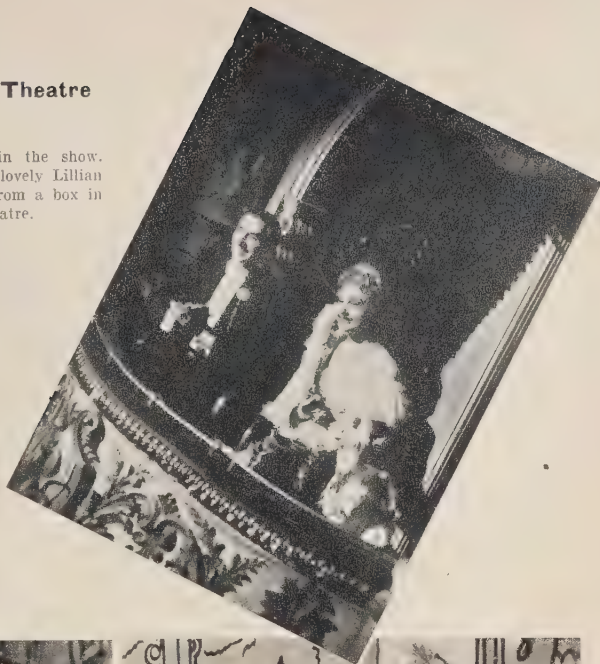


A charming interlude, in which Sally, for whom the course of true love is fraught with misunderstandings, sees herself dancing in idyllic sylvan surroundings with Tom, her Prince Charming

ACT III

The Sixth Avenue Theatre

The show within the show.
Jim Brady and lovely Lillian
Russell watch from a box in
the theatre.



(Below):

On the stage Moran and Elof
give their clever turn, and
below right, Maxie, called in
at the last minute to take the
place of Janssen who arrived
just before the show help-
lessly drunk, has an uncom-
fortable but successful time
with his co-star, Tarzan (the
Chimpanzee), (who however
did not stay still long enough
to be in the picture).





The lovely
"Flor Fina"
Ballet (to music
composed by
Victor Her-
bert). (Left):
Elsie Percival
as The Custo-
mer and Phil
Trix as The
Salesman.



The Girls step
out of their
giant 12 x 1
box.



The Show Girls
in another
scene from the
ballet



The high-spot of the show at the Sixth Avenue, Sally swims right to fame with her lovely dancing in the "Flor Fina" Ballet.



(Right):

Backstage

It is the faithful Maxie who finally brings the lovers together after the show.

At the
Little Church
Round the
Corner



The brilliant Wedding Scene. Sally and Tom (above) and Gaston De Frey and Rosy Roxie (left) are the happy couples. Right, Diamond Jim Brady with Lillian Russell, a perfect picture of Edwardian loveliness and below, the final scene.



Echoes from Broadway

By our American Correspondent E. MAWBY GREEN

INDICATIONS are that New York is being bitten by the same bug that has been bothering London all these months—the one that started the revue epidemic, which the West End is now getting over.

Broadway got its first bite when Clifford W. Fischer, by arrangement with the Messrs. Shubert, presented in March their *Priorities of 1942*, which offered at the top of the bill on a two-a-day basis at popular prices, Willie Howard, Lou Holtz, Phil Baker, Paul Draper, Hazel Scott and Gene Sheldon, the latter a young, extremely likeable comedian already popular with London audiences. The Howard-Holtz-Baker comedy antics are as famed as they are funny, but not everybody knew about the extraordinary tap dancing of Paul Draper, who is a nephew of Ruth Draper. A short while ago the Drapers appeared together; Miss Draper entertaining with her monologues and Paul cutting in with his fine and fancy footwork—a most delightful evening in the theatre it was, too. However, it took *Priorities* to bring Mr. Draper popular acclaim, which triumph was equalled only by Hazel Scott. Miss Scott is a sizzling young coloured lady, with a personality as potent as her piano playing. Known to the night clubs but not previously to the theatre, she stopped the show cold. Her piano arrangements of Chopin and "Tea for Two" are really terrific.

Small wonder then with such amazing talent *Priorities of 1942* should become an immediate hit and stay on Broadway for six months. It is about to go on tour to make way for *Priorities of 1943*.

Encouraged by the success of the original *Priorities*, the Fischer-Shubert combination rushed in another vaudeville show: *Keep 'em Laughing*, which had hit possibilities but never quite came off. Victor Moore, William Gaxton, the dancing Hartmans, Hildegarde, and a new comic Zero Mostel, topped the bill this time. A dog act, known as the Bricklayers, popped up from the bottom of the bill with more originality than most of the top performers, and practically barked off with all the honours. However, we still liked Hildegarde best, that charming singer of sophisticated songs, who has a way with a lyric that is all her own. After a short stay, Victor Moore and William Gaxton withdrew for Hollywood and Hildegarde had other commitments, so



Vandamm.

Gypsy Rose Lee in Michael Todd's *Star and Garter*, reviewed overleaf.

Gracie Fields and Argentinita formed the major replacements in a new edition *Top-Notchers*. Gracie got over, but due to her war relief bookings throughout Canada and America had to leave after five weeks, so *Top-Notchers* closed. Gracie was expected to return in *Priorities of 1943*, but is not now listed among this line-up. We would like to see Gracie in a revue built around her as she used to appear in England, rather than have her come on for twenty minutes and sing six numbers at a stretch.

ED WYNN presented himself in *Laugh, Town, Laugh*, a variety show of superb taste and talent that left everybody perfectly happy except Mr. Wynn, who could not get back his operating expenses, without capacity houses. There were standees at night, but too many empty seats at the matinee performances. The quality of his entertainment proved too high for the prices of admission.

It was a great shame that *Laugh, Town, Laugh* could not have lasted longer. You could not have wished for a more delightful show. There was Mr. Wynn acting "The Perfect Fool" again, going from gag to gag, in his coats and hats of many sizes and colours, winding his way in and out and all around his performers, with that look of lunacy on his face that gets you laughing and keeps you chuckling throughout all his crazy clowning. Ed Wynn is something special they have in comedians over here; something that cannot be replaced, so we treasure his every appearance.

WWE have also had a new Rodgers and Hart musical, an event we always look forward to, but this time we have to confess to being a bit disappointed. *By Jupiter*, it is called, based on Julian F. Thompson's *The Warrior's Husband*, which play is best remembered on Broadway for bringing Katharine Hepburn to the foreground, wherein she appeared as an Amazon warrior and captured the attentions of a Hollywood movie scout—that was ten years ago.

By Jupiter concerns the battle between Theseus (Ronald Graham) and his Greeks, and Hippolyta (Benay Venuta), Queen of the Amazons and her lady warriors, and that business of getting Queen Hippolyta's girdle, in a land where the women go to war and the men stay behind to wave goodbye. Much emphasis has been placed on this reversed position of the sexes, and it is particularly funny in the opening scenes, with Ray Bolger draping himself hysterically all over the place in delirious feminine fashion as Sapiens, Queen Hippolyta's dubious husband. From then on it depends how much variety Mr. Bolger can conjure into his feet and face. He is a wonderful dancer and exceedingly funny with his facial expressions. Bertha Belmore is back to play Pomposia, Sapiens mother, and she does a dance with Mr. Bolger that lifts the audience right out of its seat. This is about all the competition Mr. Bolger gets. He goes through some strenuous routines in a seemingly tireless manner, and also knows all the tricks for putting over a song number. Unfortunately, Messrs. Rodgers and Hart have not contributed one of their most captivating scores, and if *By Jupiter* is disappointing it is because the songs do not back up their book and the excellent talent recruited by Mr. Rodgers, Dwight Deere Wiman and Richard Kollmar, producers of the show. Constance Moore was fetched from the films for Antiope, the original Katharine Hepburn role. Miss Moore has loads of appeal and ability and is making her first stage appearance. She is already successfully launched on the screen, but *By Jupiter* should start her stocks soaring. Margaret Bannerman, in her Broadway

debut, is wasted as Heroica, being left to wilt on the side-lines. The production is lavish and altogether lovely. Irene Sharaff did the costumes, Robert Alton the dances, settings and lighting by Jo Mielziner, staged by Joshua Logan.

There are some very nice things about *By Jupiter*, and even a mediocre Rodgers and Hart score is far better than the average musical comedy tunes. The programme says they have been responsible for well over a thousand individual song numbers, so maybe they are entitled to a relapse, but it is disappointing when you emerge from a Rodgers and Hart musical without humming one blooming bar. Anyway, *By Jupiter* is a hit and already passed the one hundred performance mark.

ANOTHER musical playing to persistent standers ever since opening two months ago is Michael Todd's *Star and Garter* revue. It is a high-priced, low-down burlesque, featuring principally Bobby Clark and Gypsy Rose Lee.

Bobby Clark is a funny fellow, who leers at you from behind a big cigar and large printed black-rimmed glasses, an old favourite who has swung back into amazing popularity. He started out with a waxwork show and worked his way up via circus, cinema and Broadway musicals to the Theatre Guild, for the classical role of Bob Acres in Sheridan's *The Rivals*, from which revival he was salvaged by Mr. Todd and made a playful partner for the strip-teasing of Gypsy Rose Lee. Miss Lee, who first stripped her way to fame via Minsky's burlesque, now "takes them off" more or less for old times sake, in between autographing copies of her best seller mystery novel "The Q String Murders," with one eye on business and the other on her left shoulder strap. Her new thriller "Mother Finds a Body," is due any day now, meanwhile Gypsy slips through her tasty routines at the Music Box Theatre with the greatest of ease to endless encouragement. "I Can't Strip to Brahms," authored by herself, is one of her better solo numbers in the skow. But the first fifteen minutes are the most sensational, with Gypsy Rose Lee and the Star and Garter Girls appearing in a tail-and-torso tease that is positively eye-opening. The girls are as gorgeously undressed as any ever seen, thanks to the startling and ingenious costumes of Irene Sharaff. This is followed by "Clap Your Hands," which introduces Georgia Sothern, another recently featured Minsky maiden, with a wiggle so wicked that renders the air-cooling system practically useless. Later on Carrie Finnell, a super-busted burlesque headliner, who operates by remote muscular control, appears as the favourite wife in a scene called The Harem. After seeing Miss Finnell's speciality (both of them), it is

Continued on Page 31

"Murder Without Crime"



RAYMOND LOVELL and PETER CROFT in a scene from the play

● ONE of the best murder thrillers London has seen. *Murder Without Crime*, by Air Gunner J. Lee Thompson, is a first play which is remarkable for its telling dialogue and tense situations. Originally presented by Jack de Leon at the "Q" Theatre under the title *To Fit the Crime*, the play has only four characters, but the psychological interplay is such that there is never a dull moment from start to finish. Raymond Lovell and Peter Croft

as the tormentor and tormented are brilliant throughout, with strong support from Margaret Johnston and Joy Shelton as feminine complications. Henry Cass, who directs the play, and Elizabeth Agombar, who is responsible for the really striking décor, are also to be congratulated, as is Jack de Leon for his perspicacity in bringing an unusual and exciting problem play to the West End. The Comedy Theatre has another big success.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TUNBRIDGE-SEDGWICK &



STEPHEN, a young lawyer, whose wife had deserted him some months ago, has been seeking consolation with Grena, attractive night club hostess. On this fateful night he has brought her back with him to the luxurious West-End flat which he rents from Matthew, eccentric man-about-town, who lives on the floor below. Grena has told Stephen she is going to have a baby, and they had planned to go away together until Jan, Stephen's wife, 'phones unexpectedly to say she is returning that night.

Grena is filled with jealous rage when she realises Stephen is trying to get rid of her now that Jan is returning to him.

(Above) Peter Craft as Stephen and Joy Shelton as Grena



(Above) Snatching an antique dagger from the wall. Grena attacks Stephen, and in the ensuing struggle she is stabbed. Stephen, horrified, lifts her lifeless body into an ottoman





Matthew, who has already paid the distraught Stephen a visit, ostensibly to borrow a book, indulges in some light banter with the unsuspecting Jan, back again after her long absence.

(Raymond Lovell as Matthew and Margaret Johnston as Jan)

(Right):

Stephen: I've killed her. I tell you I've killed her. It's a relief now you know.

Stephen, his nerves almost at breaking point and tormented by the thought of the body in the ottoman, confesses the whole sordid story to his wife.





Matthew, sadistic by nature, and envious of Stephen's affluence and attractiveness for women, begins a long process of mental torture as a means of making Stephen confess. Matthew obviously knows something, and his suspicions have been confirmed on finding a charred bloodstained handkerchief in the grate.



(Right)

The demented Stephen collapses beneath the third degree methods adopted by Matthew, who seeks further to torment his victim by conjuring up horrible pictures of the hangman and his rope.

*Matthew: Fate has written that
I am not to drink from this
glass.*

Matthew eventually tries to
blackmail Stephen to the tune of
£1,500, and later insists on
changing glasses after Stephen
has poured him out a drink.



*Matthew: Look in
the ottoman Step-
hen. Look for
yourself.*

*Stephen: What
trick is this?*

To divulge what
happened next
would not be fair
to the author's
ingeniously con-
trived plot. Suffi-
cient to say there
is an unexpected
twist to the story,
and for the rest—
a visit to the
Comedy will
satisfy your
curiosity.





RAYMOND LOVELL as the sinister intellectual who takes such a delight in unravelling the mystery and terrorising his unfortunate tenant.



PETER CROFT as the weak charactered Stephen whose philandering brings such awful consequences on the night of his wife's return.



JOY SHELTON as Greba, night club hostess and Stephen's exotic and jealous mistress.



MARGARET JOHNSTON as Jan, Stephen's wife, who tries in vain to help him in his dilemma

Whispers from the Wings

BY
LOOKER ON

HAVING tea with the stars is still a delightful function, even if sandwiched rather hectically between Acts II and III or that seemingly infinitesimal pause between war time matinee and evening performance. But the outsider must always particularly marvel at the air of detachment our actors and actresses can achieve in their dressing rooms during the actual performance, and that was when I paid two such theatre visits recently.

* * * *

NORA SWINBURNE has never looked lovelier than she does in *Full Swing* at the Palace, and is, I discovered, even lovelier off stage than on. A question I wanted to put to her was a bit delayed first by two dashes on to the stage, and then by a wholly delightful interlude in which Miss Swinburne (true to her reputation) gave some sound advice to a youthful stage aspirant, just out of the schoolroom, who was listening all ears. Lucky young lady! I harked back to my own school days and wondered how I should have felt if a star like Nora Swinburne had looked my way and held out such a firm helping hand. Then came my question. "Why," I asked, "delightful though your appearance is in *Full Swing*,

have you forsaken the 'straight' theatre? We haven't forgotten, you know, your successful incursion into management with *Lot's Wife*." "Neither have I," said Miss Swinburne, with great emphasis. "Of course I haven't forsaken the 'straight' theatre, though," she added with a twinkle in her eye, "you



NORA SWINBURNE

mustn't forget my stage career was launched in musical comedy and revue, yes, and as a dancer, too. All the same, I agree with you. I would give a lot to get hold of another play as attractive as *Lot's Wife*, risks or no risks." Miss Swinburne told me too how much she likes the producing side of management, for which she has an un-

doubted flair, and from then until the next hectic rush on to the stage we talked of many delightful theatre recollections from Miss Swinburne's vast store, inspired I think by two framed and autographed photographs I noticed at my elbow. Both were of the same scene from *Dear Brutus*—of Dearth and Margaret the Dream Child, in Lob's enchanted wood: in one Gerald du Maurier, in the other John Gielgud. What a wealth of memory is conjured up by those two names and the period between those two productions. . . .

I came away convinced that Nora Swinburne has yet to do her best work as actress-manager.

* * * *

PHYLLIS MONKMAN very nearly steals the show as a delightful Lady Jane in the Stoll Theatre revival of *Rose Marie*, and I was longing to put to her a sort of corollary of the question I had previously asked Miss Swinburne. I found the opportunity at last over a cup of tea during a matinee. "Why," I asked, "in a career so much devoted to making us laugh (think of all those years as a Co-optimist for one thing), did you once play Sadie Thompson in *Rain*?" "Strange you should recall that," said Miss Monkman, I thought, rather wistfully, "for attaching to that production is much coincidence and a long story. Before I tell you all that, though, don't you think laughter and tears are very much akin, and that the power to evoke the one often implies the other? My playing opposite Esmond Knight in *Rain* at the Kings, Hammersmith, in April, 1939, is one of my big theatre memories." I recalled that Miss Monkman had had a big reception for her highly dramatic performance, and only wished I had seen her in the part. "Those were difficult days for me," added Miss Monkman (Laddie Cliff, Miss Monkman's husband, had died not many months before, in 1937), "and throwing myself wholeheartedly into my work in the theatre was the easiest way to forget."

What a delightful friendly manner is Miss Monkman's! I could have spent hours listening to her tales of the theatre. It was all too short, and I have vet to set on paper that fascinating story of why she played Sadie Thompson in *Rain*! And another time I will and must.

Save Your Waste Paper — and help the War Effort



Dame Sybil Thorndike

(October 24th)



This month Miss Barcia, member of *The Dancing Years* company, whose horoscope readings have excited much interest, finds fascinating material in the birth date of our great dramatic actress, Dame Sybil Thorndike, who is seen on the left in her most famous role of St. Joan.

have obviously brought an unusual amount of success to the always delicate matter of an artist's relationship with his world.

Dame Sybil is blessed with vital physique and super-abundant energy. The exhausting tendencies of over-enthusiasm and hasty temper may have brought their difficulties. Disliking the more tiresome aspects of custom and tradition she yet has rather a set way of going about things herself. There persists much of the child, a constant aspiring, a sensitiveness to insult, a fanciful charm and courage in the face of danger. Though intellectual virtuosity is all-embracing the life remains centred in imagination and the artist's emotional flux.

THIS month we have a highly individual horoscope that scarcely can be dealt with in the space available. It is one of profound interest both to the student of astrology and of psychology. Deep conflicts have been at work in this life and despite the "Dame" and the world-famous figure it is certain that vitality centres in realms which are impersonal, unseen and unfathomable. Five planets rising with the sign Gemini give outflow of energy from the deepest unconscious sources, represented typically by Uranus the Destroyer and Jupiter the Preserver in dramatic juxtaposition. It is as if this person held in her hand certain strings communicating with natural forces both dark and light, or loving and hating and has often been confronted with problems as to which might prevail.

Successful resolution is indicated by Mercury in the sign of the Balance. There are many unusual features which besides giving fame and genius indicate power for sublimation and spiritualisation of the impulses. Certainly her art has deep meaning and combined with her unorthodox attitude takes on an almost religious quality. One can say of such powerfully-knit horoscopes as this that the natives have a true mission, an instinct to break down and re-fashion and deliver some message that shall be a contribution among established forms. In great measure this person is unpredictable but there are two things definite and unchanging, (a) sincerity and (b) intensity. Such joys and sorrows as have been experienced are not the lot of everyone and the very uniqueness of her personal equation may have raised a barrier between the native and her fellows. One hundred per cent. sincerity also is not a quality that everyone can cope with unfortunately for our age. Yet wide sympathies and courage



This Month's General Horoscope



IF your birthday falls between September 23rd and October 23rd (approximately) you come under the influence of Libra, the Balance, ruled by Venus and one of the most beautiful signs in the Zodiac. It is worth noting that the Balance is the only portion of the Zodiac whose symbol is an inanimate object and detachment and disinterestedness are two great ideals of people responding to this influence. In this sign the higher and lower natures are brought into just relationship and the mind tends towards justice. Its most distinguishing characteristic is the desire to please and the highest manifestation of this is devotion.

If you respond freely to this sign you are sociable, affectionate, artistic and romantic. You have a clear mind with tendencies towards the perception of the artist, but you are too democratic to want to shine at the expense of others. You are neither too shy nor too proud, but you incline to give way for the sake of peace. You are interested in everything, hopeful and pleasant and you have not a very aggressive spirit. You are a good companion and a true lover, but must beware of pitfalls connected with marriage, etc., as you are rather too much inclined to entrust your fate to the hands of unknown quantities. Libra often confers exceptional charm and good looks and gives its natives a love of all refinements. It is the most civilised of the signs and if there is any weakness it is in lack of drive and self-reliance.

New Shows of the Month (cont'd)

Franken's play to achieve its phenomenal American success over here. Without such stars its slight theme would fail to grip. But with an actress like Pamela Brown to play a role as provocative as Claudia the whole emphasis is changed: the play becomes a vehicle for a star whom all London will want to see.

Claudia, psychologically undeveloped girl wife of David Naughton, has exasperating reactions to life in general which are complicated by a mother fixation. That she is fascinating after the manner of all unselfconscious wayward children goes without saying. Our heart nevertheless goes out to her almost saintlike husband for his patience and forbearing through the manifold trials which precede Claudia's "growing up." Claudia's mother is no less patient, but then perhaps she had daughter fixation.

There is much humour in the play, largely attendant upon Claudia's naive preoccupation with sex (exaggerated by the happenings on her husband's farm), and a corresponding amount of pathos in the last act when mother and daughter, their emotional attitude to each other never properly adjusted, make their mutual effort to hide the knowledge of the mother's fatal disease. The fact that Claudia has just discovered she is going to have a baby, while rounding off the tale nicely, almost seems an unnecessary intrusion, and anyway something we hadn't quite expected from the childlike Mrs. Naughton.

Hugh Sinclair's partnering of Miss Brown as the much tried husband is flawless, and a revelation of the wide range of his dramatic gift. Mary Hinton is charming as Claudia's mother. Lea Seidl makes a brief but amusing appearance as a prima donna. Excellent performances in support come from Frederic Richter, Amy Frank, Thorley Walters and Mary Martlew. F.S.

REVIVALS

MOST delightful of the recent revivals of old musical favourites is *The Belle of New York*, which, judging by the reception accorded it at the Coliseum, should have a considerable run. The production (slightly "modernised" in technique) is brilliant, the cast distinguished, nor have the old melodies lost their

irresistible appeal. Evelyn Laye, in good voice, is *The Belle*, and provides a really big moment with her first entrance. Later when she abandons the saintlike appeal of New York's leading Salvation Army lass, her performance is not so convincing, and is indeed quite overshadowed by Enid Stamp-Taylor's brilliant Cora Angelique. Outstanding too are the performances of Billy Danvers, Billy Tasker, Marion Wilson, Daphne Tanner, Dimitri Vetter, Irving Kaye and Jane Corda.

SYDNEY HOWARD fans will not mind the inane complications of that typical farce *Night of the Garter* in their enjoyment of Mr. Howard's side-splitting antics. Austin Melford is, of course, responsible for the revised edition of Avery Hopwood and Wilson Collison's American farce, first produced over here ten years ago, and the present production retains all the slickness of the original English presentation, which enjoyed a long run. Supporting Mr. Howard are Jack Melford, Muriel George, Rene Ray, Joan Shannon, Neal Arden, Max Kirby, Marjorie Brooks and Anthony Bazell.

VERY workmanlike is the revival of *A Man with Red Hair* at the Ambassadors, in which Francis L. Sullivan gives a brilliant performance as the sinister Mr. Crispin. Walter Hudd, Richard Carr and Gillian Lind are excellent as the victims of his strange mania, and the setting and production are nicely calculated to send shivers down the spine. F.S.

Echoes from Broadway (continued)

quite obvious why she is the Sultan's piece-de-resistance. Then there is Professor Lamberti, a sly, disreputable-looking zylophone player, who bows graciously and obliges with encore after encore of "Wishing," cheerfully convinced that it is his manipulation of the zylophone that is causing the cheering among the audience, when actually a cute little number is politely taking off her clothes behind him.

The Star and Garter revue has been designed to take your mind off everything but women. Beneath the glitter of the silver and gold it is stark, old-time burlesque, grovelling in grandeur and blinding you with its extravagance.

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AMATEUR STAGE

Notes and Topics

INCLUDED in the autumn fixtures of the International Arts Centre is a reading on October 20th, at 7.30 p.m., by Margaret Rawlings from the works of Gerard Manley Hopkins and A. E. Housman. The Centre, at 22, St. Petersburg Place, W.2, appeals for more support to meet a deficit in working.

During the approaching winter, classes at Toynbee Hall will again meet in the evenings, and not at weekends. The risks of the black-out will be accepted. There will be classes in art, drama and music. In singing and instrumental music private tuition can be arranged if required. An attractive group of other classes includes ballet dancing, fencing and physical training. There are classes also in public speaking and speech training. The session began on September 1st. Intending students should call or send a stamped envelope for a copy of the syllabus to The Registrar, Toynbee Hall, 28, Commercial Street, E.1.

ARRANGEMENTS for a drama festival to be held at Barnoldswick include twelve teams of local amateurs, in one-act plays

on the four evenings of October 8th, 10th, 14th and 17th. All performances will be in the Queen's Hall, and there will also be a festival ball on Tuesday, October 13th, in the Majestic Ballroom.

In addition to groups of the Viking Players, who are sponsoring the festival, the following local societies have entered. Barnoldswick Youth Club, Nelson and Barrowford Amateur Dramatic Society, The Burnley Ballet and Arts Club, The Black and White Players, The Colne Women's Social Service and the Colne Y.W.C.A.

The festival will be non-competitive; that is to say, there will be no placing of productions in order of merit; but the adjudicator, Miss Pamela Margetson, of the Lancashire and Cheshire Rural Community Council, will publicly criticise each production after the performance.

General organisation is in the hands of the Viking Players, and the profits of the festival will be distributed equally among the teams for disposal in any way they desire. The Viking Players, in addition to their work for the festival, have various full length plays in rehearsal and under consideration. *The First Mrs. Fraser* by St. John Ervine was produced at the Queen's Hall on September 26th.

AMATEURS have noted with interest the revival in London recently of some of the popular old musicals. Whether these professional revivals have justified the expectations of their promoters is another matter, but now, at the beginning of another season, there are reports that amateur enquiries for such works are numerically ahead of last year.

The most recent of these professional revivals, *The Belle of New York* at the Coliseum, played to capacity at Coventry and Birmingham before coming to town. It remains to be seen whether London will respond to its pleasant tunes, aided by Evelyn Laye's personality. If so, it may be rather refreshing evidence that the public wants and will respond to music that is not the syncopated noise of past decades.

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Miscellaneous Announcements

WANTED—by well-known theatrical management, plays of all description with view to production. If sent with stamped and addressed envelope will be read and returned as quickly as possible. Horsfield & Woodward, 14a, Gloucester Mansions, Cambridge Circus, W.C.2.

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The Amateur Stage

THAT the forthcoming amateur season looks much better than last year is the opinion of play agents, who report quite a healthy demand for productions up to Christmas. This pre-supposes the absence of heavy air attacks, which would re-act on theatres as in 1940. A considerable proportion of amateur enquiries for plays are for forces entertainment.

There cannot be the usual spate of autumn releases for amateurs, owing to the great difficulty of getting the material in print. The paper shortage gets more acute, and the chances of an acting edition for amateurs get more remote. Working from manuscript and using original production ideas is the most satisfying course for the true artist, but it is often a gospel of perfection for amateurs. So the standing material must be well explored. There is plenty of it.

THEATRE CROSSWORD

A prize of two stalls tickets for a West End show (or autographed photograph of a stage celebrity) will go to each of the senders of the first three correct solutions of the crossword given below, opened on October 15th. Address: "Crossword," THEATRE WORLD, 1, Dorset Buildings, Salisbury Square, E.C.4. (Entries may be written on a sheet of notepaper with solutions in two columns—the "across" on the left, the "down" on the right).

September Solution

The first three correct solutions opened on September 15th came from Miss Joan Wilkins, "The Laurels," Draycott, Cheddar, Somerset; 2nd Lt. W. St. John Tayleur, "Heathercliffe," Walton, Clevedon, Somerset; and Miss P. Palmer, Flat 6, 17, Cathcart Hill, Highgate, N.

The solutions are: Across—1, Playact; 4, Novello; 8, Exit Nan; 10, Dynamic; 11, Repro; 13, Amorous; 15, Onset; 17, Nip; 18, On red; 20, Eyes; 22, Abet; 23, Tall comic; 25, Posy; 26, Inks; 29, Thane; 30, Spe; 32, Tsars; 33, Locarno; 36, Folio; 37, E. P. Clift; 38, Cicely's; 39, Sisters; 40, West End. Down—1, Preston; 2, Adipose; 3, Charm; 5, Of you; 6, Limbert; 7, Orchids; 9, Neon; 10, Drop; 12, Principal; 13, At easel; 14, Sob into; 16, Eytton; 19, Necks; 21, Sly; 22, Ami; 24, Stagers; 25, Palace; 27, Saville; 28, As posed; 30, Scot; 31, Eric; 34, Offer; 35, Noise.

CLUES

- Across**
- Owen's the - of the other 2 (4)
 - Mix old, for Sheridan-esque "Gor bloney!" (4)
 - Closing distance of "The Only Way" (4)
 - Stage desert singer (4)
 - Very fine violins make Keane plays, opening with Miss Beaumont, maybe (8)
 - In time revues is cap mixture (5)
 - Accompany, in great ten dramas (6)
 - Streamy quality of Warner meal (4)
 - On nearly ill in "The Blue Bird" (3)
 - A film Irving (5)
 - Mr. Ephraim's shelter? (3)
 - Eventually married Lord Fancourt Babberley (3)
 - One of the Tess family (11)
 - I'm loving in a "Mollusc" (3)
 - "Thou know'st my daughter's of a pretty —"—Romeo and Juliet (3)
 - Do sailors say this of a bad play? (5)
 - Nickname, no doubt of curate in "Love's Labour Lost" (3)
 - "— In Full" (Aldwych, 1908) (4)
 - Spunk lines this fashion—get the bird (6)
 - Ballet-body (5)
 - Go, Tearle, to be my other self (5, 3)
 - Capital in Novello's loft (4)
 - Lillian, of Springfield, O (4)
 - Clara Novello-Davies' Irish isle? (4)
 - E. W. Garden's special claim to fame in his later years (3, 3)

Down

- He may act thus who's had a meal backwards for a start (6)
- See 2 (5)
- Main word of its title's confused in its own Conrade (3)
- One act ends truth (4)
- Frightened lady had one at Wyndham's, rta Wallace (4)
- Great de Silva part (4)
- Happily the clown makes holidays (5)
- Tin god (4, 4)
- O, smother ego—turn to pantomime (6, 5)
- "—, come, Kate, come; you must not look so sour"—The Taming of the Shrew (3)



Pattern by courtesy of W. Walker & Sons (Assd.), Ltd.

- Should be favourite Christmas carol in Lambeth Walk (4)
- Appropriate stage hanging for Whitehall Theatre (3, 5)
- Practised by lazy dancers? (8)
- This the actor who'd once been a Hyde Park orator? (6)
- Seid's meadow (3)
- Girl in "The Venetians" (3)
- Maid to the Hooks of Holland (4)
- Invariably "boys" (5)
- Do stage-builders acquire them from housemaids? (6)
- Act of the man with the popo-mack (3)
- They obviously do this at the Victoria Palace just now (5)
- Diminutive place for most of "The Tempest" (4)
- An early Maugham's in such a tract (4)
- Put 45 inches in him for the Moorish murderer (4)
- There's something cracked in employing agents (3)

H.C.G.S.

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